

CRIME

**THE LAW
ALWAYS WINS!**

SMASHERS

MARCH, No. 9
10¢

OVER YA
ED, PUNK!
NOBODY'LL
NOW WHAT
OPENED WHEN
HEY SWEEP
A UP OFF
SIDEWALK!
HA! HA!

HELP!
HELP!

HOPE WE'RE IN TIME --
GOTTA PLUG THE MANIAC
BEFORE THAT POOR
FELLOW GOES OVER
THE EDGE --!!



featuring:

**SALLY THE SLEUTH
DAN TURNER
GIRL FRIDAY
RAY HALE**

CRIME CAN'T PAY — IN ANY WAY!



WEB COMIC
UNIVERSE.COM

DAN TURNER

HOLLYWOOD DETECTIVE

"THE CORPSE IN LOWER 9"

PICTURES:

MAX PLAISTED

STORY:

ROBT L. BELLEM

DAN TURNER, AFTER A LUNCH DATE WITH HIS FRIEND PETE PELHAM OF PINNACLE STUDIOS SPECIAL EFFECTS DEPARTMENT, IS INVITED TO VIEW SOME RUSH FOOTAGE

COME ALONG, SHERLOCK! I'LL SHOW YOU THE ROUGH PRINT OF A SPECTACULAR RAILROAD WRECK I SHOT YESTERDAY!

PROJECTION ROOM

SOUNDS INTERESTING, PAL!

THE SEQUENCE IS A RUNAWAY PULLMAN SLEEPER THAT CRACKS UP ON A DOWN-GRADE!

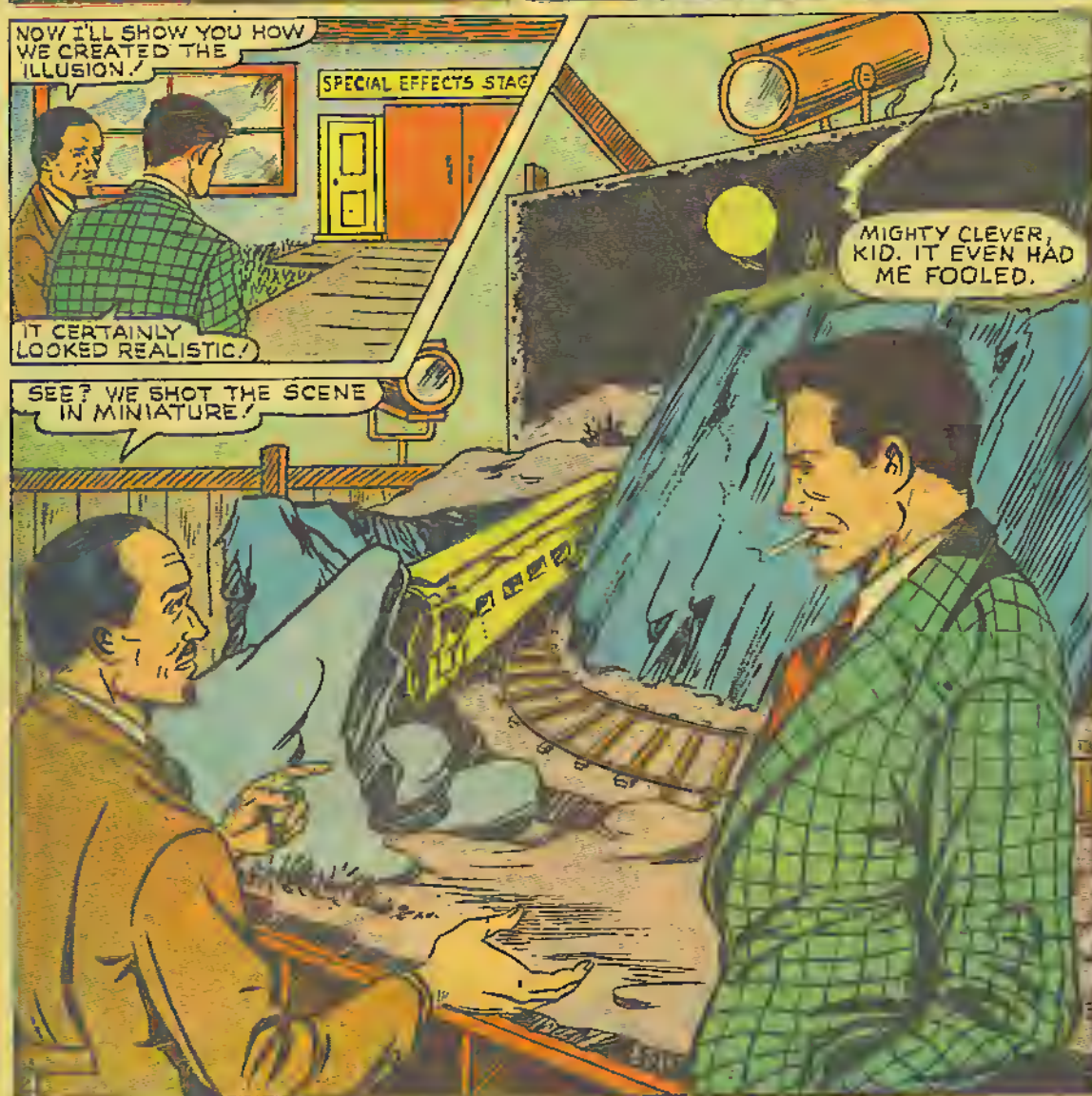
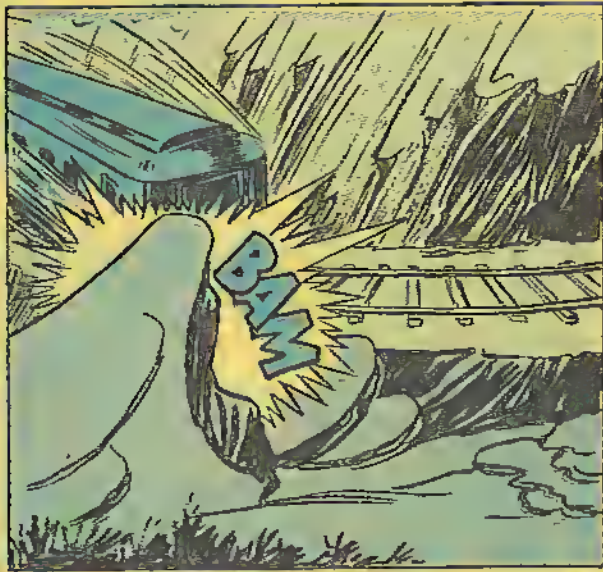
OKAY, LET IT ROLL!

THE LIGHTS GO OUT AND THE SCREEN COMES ALIVE!

THAT CAR'S GATHERING PLENTY OF SPEED!

WATCH IT LEAVE THE RAILS ON A CURVE IN THE NEXT SHOT!





NOW LET'S GO OVER TO SOUND STAGE SIX AND WATCH THEM SHOOT THE MATCHING SCENE--A FULL SIZE MOCK-UP OF THE PULLMAN INTERIOR! IT'S FULL OF CUTIES TOO.



YOU'RE MAKING ME DROOL!

INCIDENTALLY, MY EX-WIFE, PEGGY CABOT, PLAYS A SUPPORTING ROLE! THE DERAILED PULLMAN IS SUPPOSED TO BE CARRYING A TROUPE OF SHOW GIRLS AND PEGGY'S ONE OF THEM!

TOO BAD YOU AND PEGGY EVER GOT DIVORCED, PETE! I ALWAYS FIGURED YOUR JEALOUSY WAS FOOLISH!

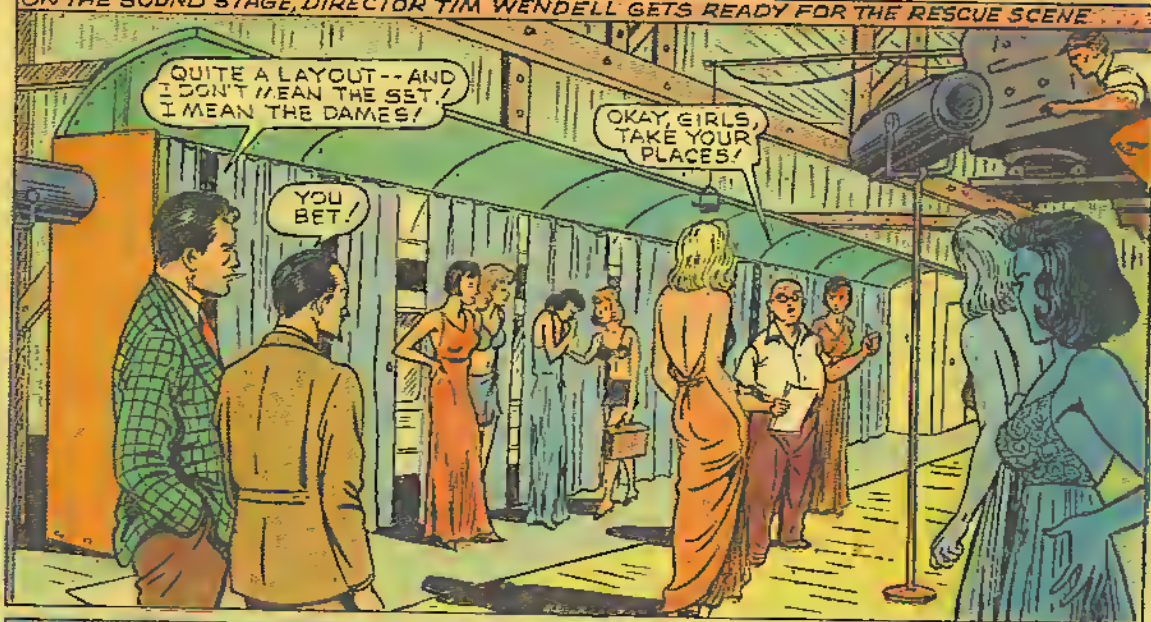


ON THE SOUND STAGE, DIRECTOR TIM WENDELL GETS READY FOR THE RESCUE SCENE

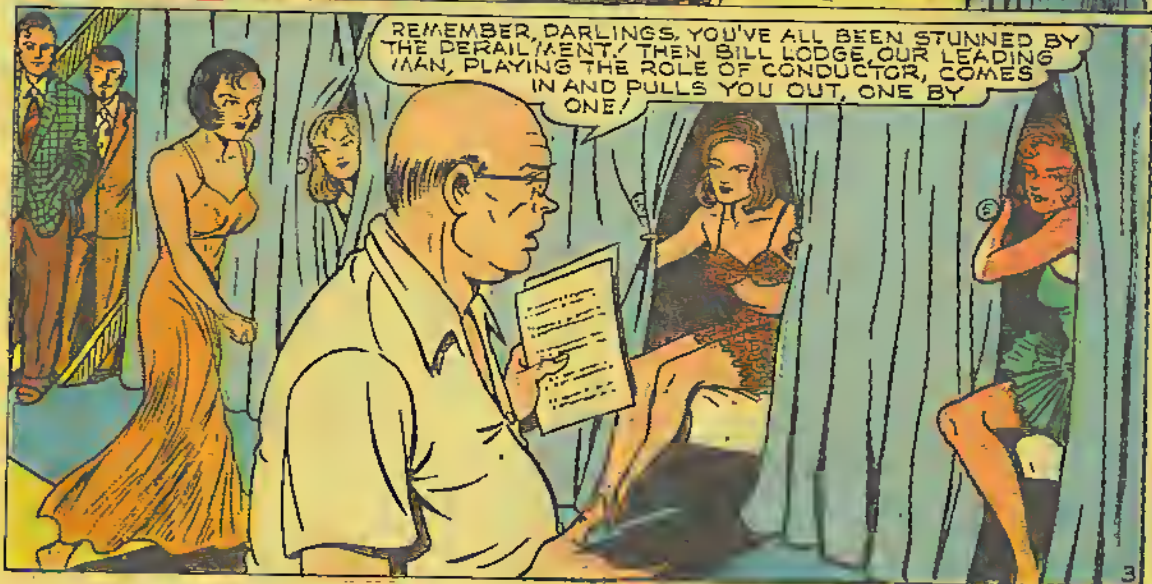
QUITE A LAYOUT--AND I DON'T MEAN THE SET, I MEAN THE DAMES!

OKAY, GIRLS, TAKE YOUR PLACES!

YOU BET!



REMEMBER, DARLINGS, YOU'VE ALL BEEN STUNNED BY THE DERAILMENT! THEN BILL LODGE, OUR LEADING MAN, PLAYING THE ROLE OF CONDUCTOR, COMES IN AND PULLS YOU OUT, ONE BY ONE!



I'VE GOT TO LEAVE, PHILO / YOU STAY IF YOU WISH.

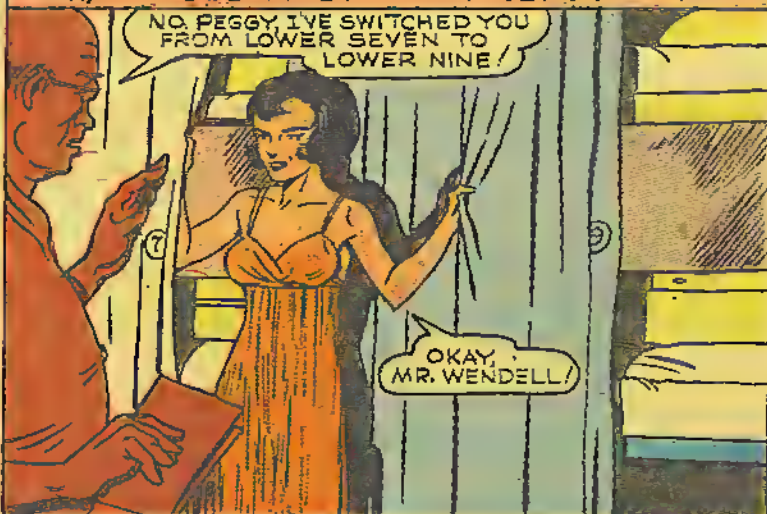
THANKS, I WILL / THIS IS TOO GOOD TO MISS!



AFTER PELHAM HAS GONE, HIS EX-WIFE, PEGGY CABOT, STARTS TO CLIMB INTO LOWER BERTH NO. 7.

NO, PEGGY, I'VE SWITCHED YOU FROM LOWER SEVEN TO LOWER NINE!

OKAY, MR. WENDELL!

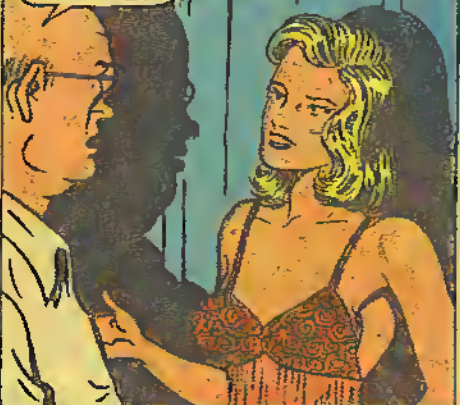


I CHANGED THE SCRIPT AND PUT OUR LEADING LADY, DIXIE DARE, IN LOWER SEVEN SO WE CAN GET A BETTER CAMERA ANGLE ON HER! HEY, WHERE IS DIXIE?



THE BEAUTIFUL BLONDE STAR APPEARS — PAGING ME, TIM?

YES! CLIMB INTO LOWER SEVEN! WE'RE READY FOR A TAKE!



SEVEN, EH? ALL RIGHT -- BUT LET'S MAKE IT SNAPPY, I'VE GOT SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF.



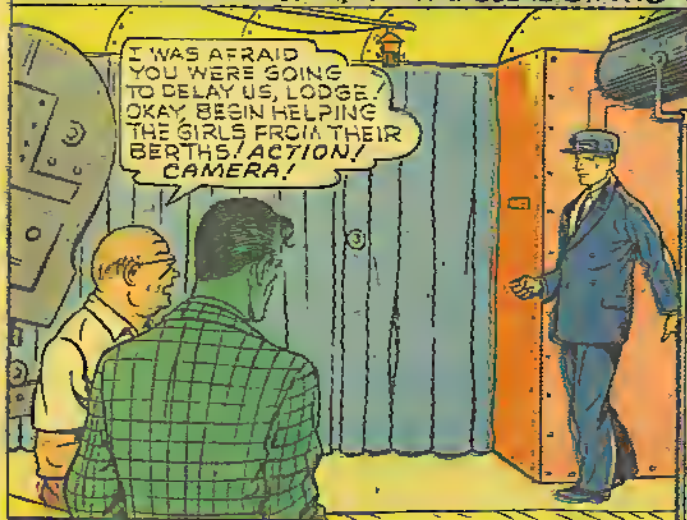
WITH ALL BERTH CURTAINS DRAWN AND WENDELL LINING UP HIS SHOT, BEN STILLMAN, THE PRODUCER, COMES ON THE SET.

EVERYTHING GOING TO SUIT YOU, WENDELL?



JUST FINE, MR. STILLMAN! IF YOU SEE BILL LODGE ON THE SIDELINES SEND HIM TO ME! I'M READY TO ROLL!

STILLMAN LEAVES, BILL LODGE APPEARS IN THE UNIFORM OF A CONDUCTOR, AND THE SCENE STARTS



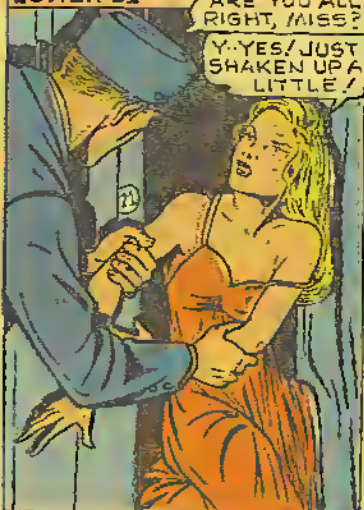
I WAS AFRAID YOU WERE GOING TO DELAY US, LODGE! OKAY, BEGIN HELPING THE GIRLS FROM THEIR BERTHS! ACTION! CAMERA!

BILL LODGE ASSISTS A RED-HEAD FROM LOWER 13



(ARE YOU HURT, LADY?)
I'M OKAY, THANKS!

HE HELPS A BLONDE FROM LOWER 11



ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MISS?
Y-YES! JUST SHAKEN UP A LITTLE!

BUT WHEN HE REACHES INTO LOWER 9 HE YEERS A LINE OF DIALOGUE NOT IN THE SCRIPT



GOOD GOSH!

LODGE BACKS AWAY WITH A BLOODSTAINED KNIFE IN HIS GRASP



PEGGY CABOT'S DEAD! I FOUND THIS KNIFE STICKING IN HER THROAT!

PEGGY'S EX-HUSBAND, SPECIAL EFFECTS EXPERT PETE PELHAM, RETURNS TO THE SET IN TIME TO BE ACCUSED

THERE'S A REMOVABLE PANEL IN THE OUTSIDE WALL OF LOWER 9. THE KILLER REACHED IN AND STABBED HER!

PELHAM, YOU WERE STILL JEALOUS OF PEGGY, IS THAT WHY YOU RIGGED THE FALSE PANEL AND KILLED HER?

THAT'S A LIE! I DIDN'T DO IT!



OF COURSE PELHAM DIDN'T DO IT! I CAN PROVE IT!

TURNER NOTICES THAT DIXIE DARE IS MISSING

GOT TO FIND THAT BLONDE QUAIL / SHE'S THE KEY TO THIS PUZZLE!



WHEN HE RACES OFF THE SET



WHEN TURNER WAKES UP

YIPE, WHAT A HEADACHE / HEY, SOMEBODY GLOMMED MY CAT!



ON THE SET FIREMEN HAVE PUT OUT THE BLAZE --- AND DAVE DONALDSON OF THE HOMICIDE SQUAD HAS ARRIVED

HI, DAVE! HOW THE DEVIL DID YOU GET HERE?

SOMEBODY PHONED HEADQUARTERS, BUT WHEN I RUSHED OVER, EVERYBODY WAS GONE BUT THESE FIREMEN --- AND PEGGY CABOT'S CORPSE!



JEEPER! YOU'D BETTER ROUND UP PELHAM, WENDELL AND LODGE / I'LL TRY TO FIND DIXIE DARE!

YOU WOULD CHOOSE A DAME TO HUNT AND LEAVE THE MEN TO ME!



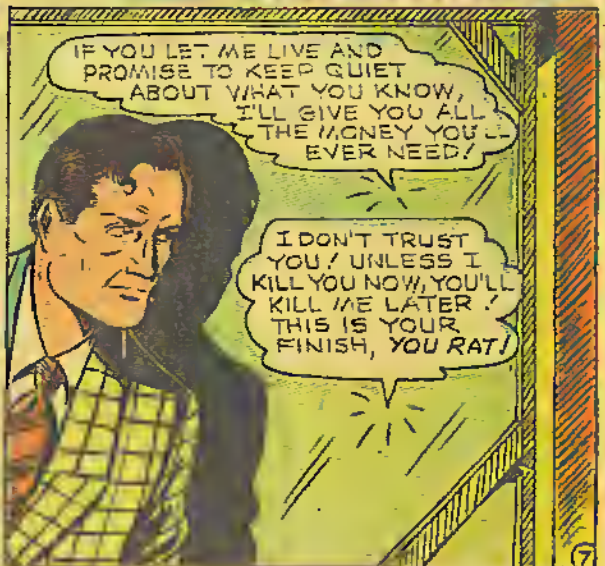
MUCH LATER, TURNER HEARS VOICES BEHIND A SCENERY FLAT

YOU'VE BEEN BLACK-MAILING ME FOR A YEAR! NOW YOU WANT TO KILL ME!

WHAT'S SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE IS SAUCE FOR THE GANDER!

IF YOU LET ME LIVE AND PROMISE TO KEEP QUIET ABOUT WHAT YOU KNOW, I'LL GIVE YOU ALL THE MONEY YOU'LL EVER NEED!

I DON'T TRUST YOU! UNLESS I KILL YOU NOW, YOU'LL KILL ME LATER! THIS IS YOUR FINISH, YOU RAT!



TURNER LUNGES THROUGH THE CANVAS BACKDROP

HOLD EVERYTHING, DIXIE DARE!



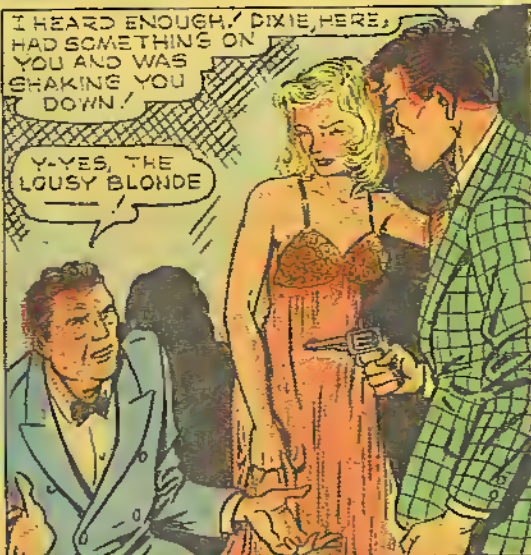
--AND RECOVERS THE GAT DIXIE STOLE WHEN SHE SLUGGED HIM--

DON'T PLUG STILLMAN, BASE! SAVE HIM FOR THE GAS CHAMBER!



I HEARD ENOUGH, DIXIE, HERE, HAD SOMETHING ON YOU AND WAS SHAKING YOU DOWN!

Y-YES, THE LOUSY BLONDE



YOU RIGGED A PHONEY PANEL IN LOWER BERTH 9 SO YOU COULD REACH IN, CROAK HER AND GET HER OFF YOUR NECK! BUT PEGGY CABOT TOOK HER PLACE, SO IT WAS PEGGY YOU STABBED!

IT WAS A M-M-MISTAKE! I DIDN'T MEAN TO K-KILL PEGGY!



DAVE DONALDSON ANKLES INTO VIEW

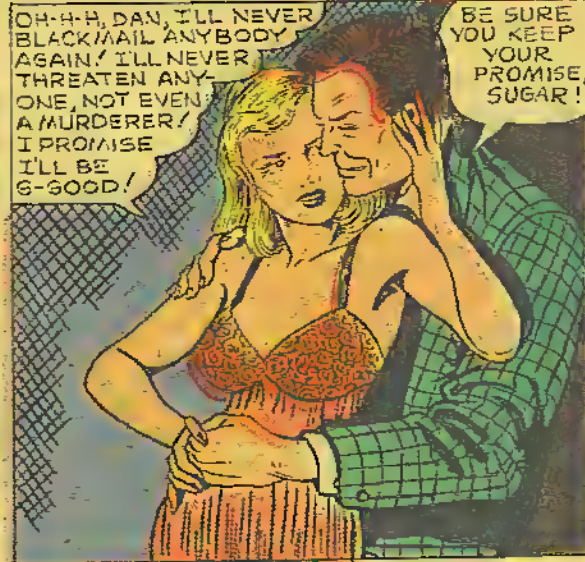
I WAS EAVESDROPPING, HAWKSHAW! MISTAKE OR NO MISTAKE, THIS CREED WILL SNIFF CYANIDE!

YEAH! CART HIM TO THE GOW!



OH-H-H, DAN, I'LL NEVER BLACKMAIL ANYBODY AGAIN! I'LL NEVER THREATEN ANYONE, NOT EVEN A MURDERER! I PROMISE I'LL BE G-GOOD!

BE SURE YOU KEEP YOUR PROMISE, SUGAR!



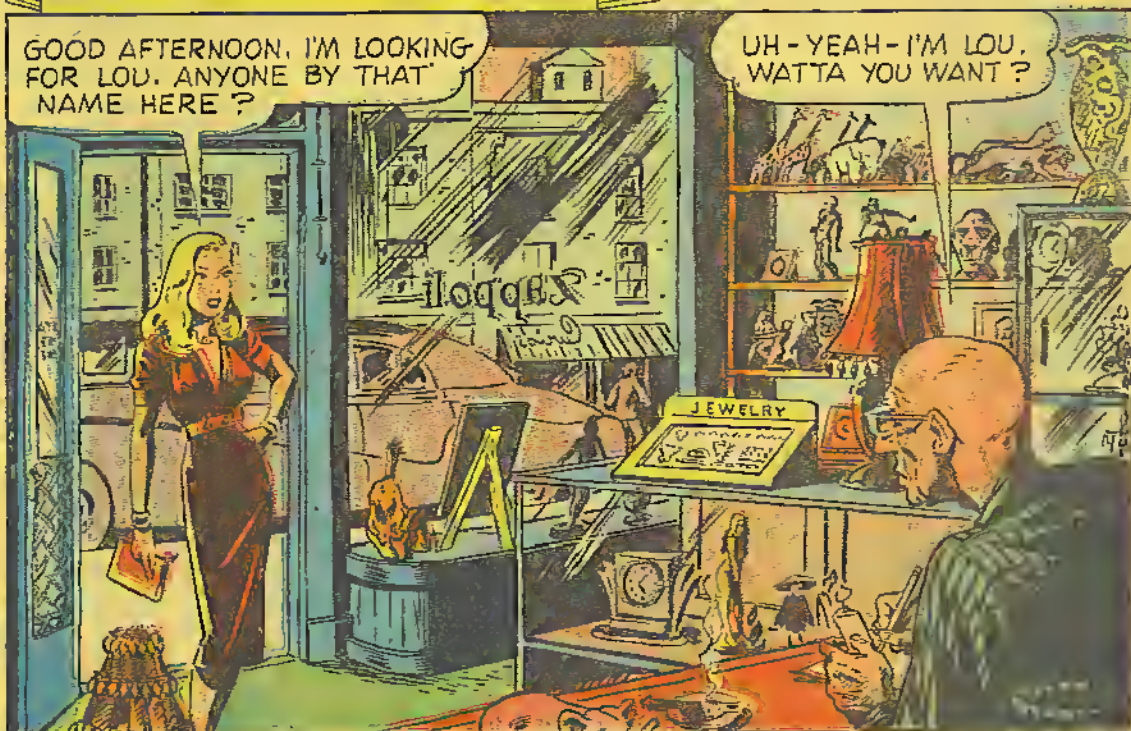
SALLY THE SLEUTH

IN A QUANT, CLUTTERED CURIO SHOP, THE PROPRIETOR, LOUIS ZAPPOLI, LOOKS UP AS THE DOOR OPENS AND A GIRL ENTERS...

in "BLONDE DECOY"
by Keats Petree

GOOD AFTERNOON. I'M LOOKING FOR LOU. ANYONE BY THAT NAME HERE?

UH-YEAH-I'M LOU. WATTA YOU WANT?



I'D LIKE TO TRANSACT A LITTLE CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS. CAN WE TALK PRIVATELY?

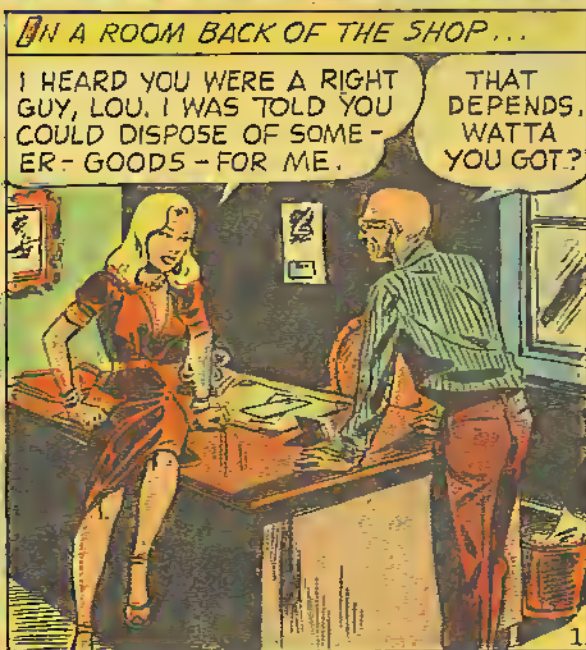
SURE-COME IN HERE.



IN A ROOM BACK OF THE SHOP...

I HEARD YOU WERE A RIGHT GUY, LOU. I WAS TOLD YOU COULD DISPOSE OF SOME-ER-GOODS-FOR ME.

THAT DEPENDS, WATTA YOU GOT?



THE GIRL PRODUCES A BRACELET...

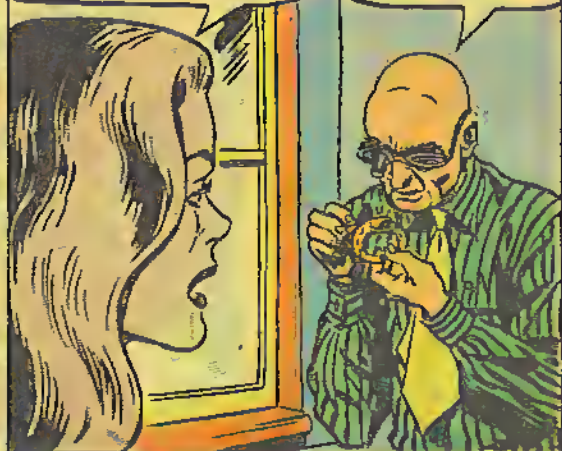
TAKE A LOOK AT THIS -

WHERE'D YOU GET IT?



I WORK ONLY THE BEST HOTELS. I DON'T TOUCH ANY CHEAP JUNK.

THIS IS A VALUABLE PIECE, TOOTS.



LOU LOOKS AT THE GIRL SUSPICIOUSLY...

SAY, I DON'T KNOW YOU. WHY DID YOU COME TO ME?

JOE THE JUNKIE SENT ME TO SEE YOU. I'M NEW IN THIS TOWN.



LOU EXAMINES THE BRACELET AGAIN AND HIS AVARICIOUS EYES GLITTER...

ALL RIGHT - I'M TAKING A CHANCE, BUT I'LL TAKE IT OFF YOUR HANDS.

OKAY. I WANT THE DOUGH RIGHT AWAY.



LOU DOES OUT THE MONEY, MUCH LESS THAN THE BRACELET'S VALUE...

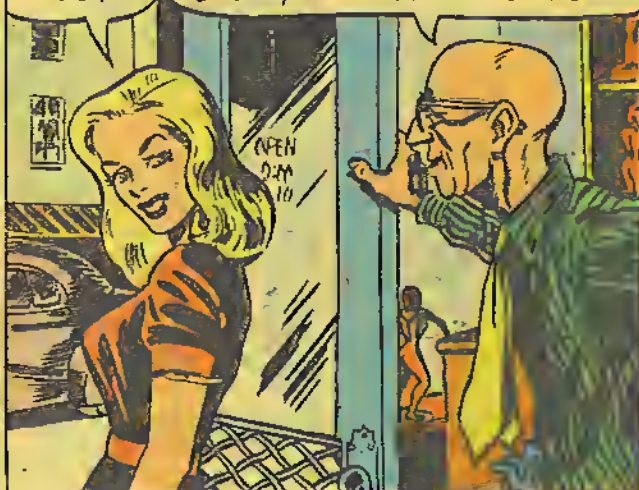
HERE YOU ARE - CASH ON THE LINE.

THAT'S THE WAY I LIKE TO DO BUSINESS.



SO LONG, LOU.

ANY TIME YOU GET ANY MORE STUFF, COME AND SEE ME.



TEN DAYS LATER, THE GIRL VISITS THE "FENCE" AND FINDS ANOTHER VISITOR THERE...

HELLO, LOU. HERE I AM AGAIN -

HELLO-MEET TAD DENNING, HE'S IN YOUR LINE.

HY, BABY, WHERE'VE YOU BEEN ALL MY LIFE?



LET'S HAVE A COCKTAIL, BEAUTIFUL?

SURE - I'D LOVE TO.



AT THE SWANKIEST BAR IN TOWN...

YOU HIT THE BEST PLACES, DON'T YOU?

YEP, AND LOU TELLS ME YOU DO TOO.



LISTEN, GORGEOUS, WE'D MAKE A SWELL TEAM, WE CAN'T MISS! LET'S TALK IT OVER. HOW ABOUT COMING UP TO MY PLACE?

SURE, HANDSOME.



THEY GO TO TAD BENNING'S APARTMENT...

HAVE A DRINK, SUGAR-PLUM.

THANKS.

I'D LIKE TO SEE MORE OF THIS GUY'S PLACE -



SHE DELIBERATELY SPILLS HER DRINK...

OH-H!! MY DRESS!



OH, MY DRESS IS ALL WET! CAN I BORROW A ROBE WHILE IT DRIES?

SURE, GO IN THERE AND HELP YOURSELF.



SHE CHANGES, AND COMES BACK...

SAY-YOU LOOK SWELL! BOY! WHAT A FIGURE!

IT'S SO THOUGHTFUL OF YOU TO HAVE SUCH BEAUTIFUL NEGLIGEEES HANDY.



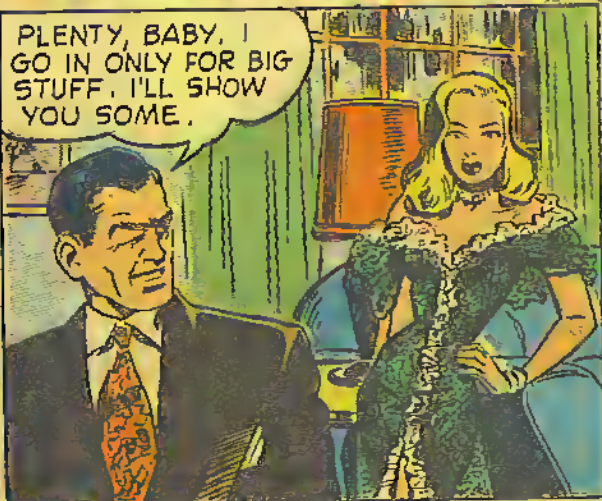
WHILE WAITING FOR HER DRESS TO DRY, THEY GET REAL CHUMMY...

YOU TOLD ME YOU'RE A CLEVER GIRL. WE'LL MAKE A FORTUNE!

LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS. WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?



PLENTY, BABY. I GO IN ONLY FOR BIG STUFF. I'LL SHOW YOU SOME.



HE SHOWS HER A TREASURE IN GEMS...

LOOK AT THIS!

SAY-THIS IS TERRIFIC! YOU'RE THE KIND OF GUY I'D LIKE TO WORK WITH. WE'LL GO PLACES!



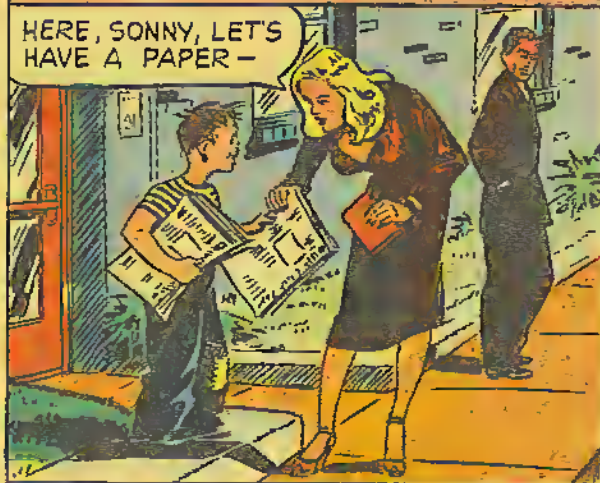
IT'S SEVEN O'CLOCK. LET'S GO TO DINNER. WE CAN COME BACK AND TALK OVER OUR PLANS AFTERWARDS.

OKAY. I'M HUNGRY.



AT THE BUILDING ENTRANCE, THE GIRL BUYS AN EVENING PAPER FROM A BOY...

HERE, SONNY, LET'S HAVE A PAPER -



A FEW MINUTES LATER, THE BOY RACES INTO THE OFFICE OF A PRIVATE DETECTIVE, WITH NEWS...

HEY, CHIEF, I GOT A NOTE FOR YOU. SHE SLIPPED IT TO ME JUST NOW.



THE DETECTIVE READS THE NOTE...

OKAY, PEANUTS. WE WON'T ACT JUST YET. I'LL SEND HER FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS. YOU'LL GET THEM TO HER.

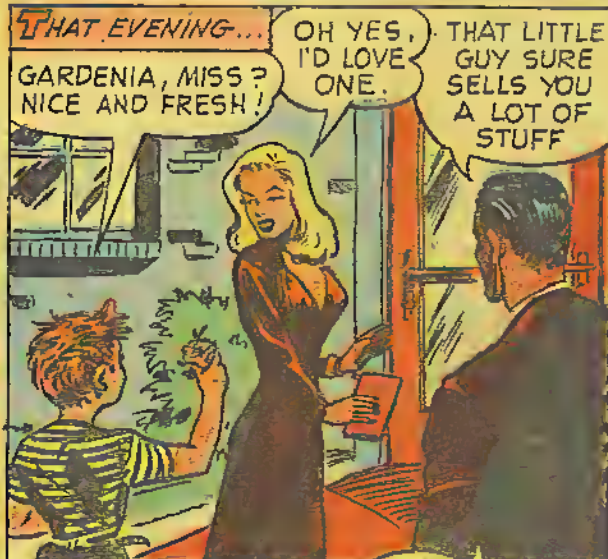


THAT EVENING...

GARDENIA, MISS? NICE AND FRESH!

OH YES, I'D LOVE ONE.

THAT LITTLE GUY SURE SELLS YOU A LOT OF STUFF

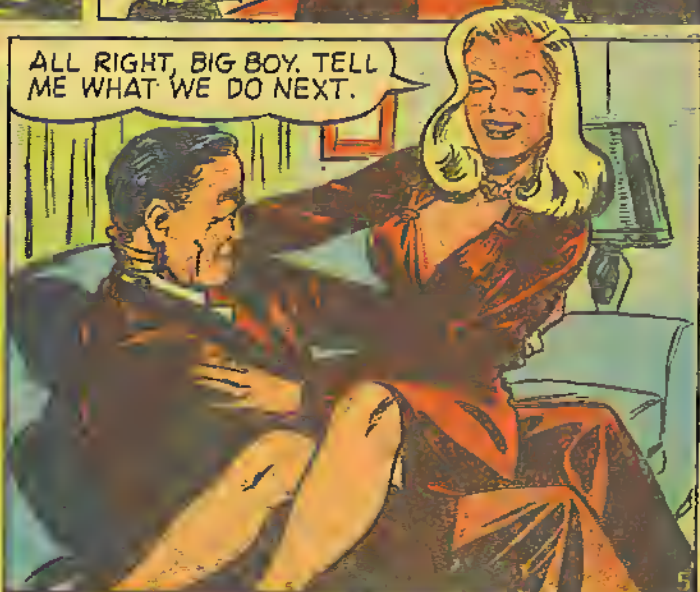


UPSTAIRS, THE GIRL PRIVATELY EXAMINES THE FLOWER...

HERE'S A NOTE, I KNEW THE CHIEF WOULD TELL ME WHAT TO DO. I GUESS I HAVE TO PLAY THIS GUY ALONG -



ALL RIGHT, BIG BOY. TELL ME WHAT WE DO NEXT.



LISTEN CAREFULLY, HONEY. MADAME DUCHARME, THE OPERA STAR, HAS JUST BEEN GIVEN A DIAMOND CHOKER WORTH \$100,000 BY HER WEALTHY, DOTING HUSBAND. I HAPPEN TO KNOW THAT SHE PLANS TO WEAR IT ONSTAGE WHEN SHE SINGS "TRAVIATA" AT THE OPERA TOMORROW NIGHT, AND ALSO AT A RECEPTION BEING GIVEN FOR HER BY A MUSICAL SOCIETY LATER THE SAME EVENING. THIS IS A PERFECT SET-UP. THE SPARKLERS ARE AS GOOD AS OURS --

YES, BUT HOW WILL WE --?

LISTEN, BABY, JUST REMEMBER THAT I'M THE BRAINS OF THIS COMBINATION. DON'T TALK. JUST GIVE ME A KISS.

SHE
REBELS.

HEY! REMEMBER -- THIS IS JUST A BUSINESS DEAL. LET ME GO!

ALL RIGHT, I HAVE OPERATIONS ALL WORKED OUT. HERE GOES -- LISTEN CAREFULLY --

LATER... THE GIRL BUYS ANOTHER PAPER FROM THE BOY...

NEXT EVENING, IN MME. DUCHARMES DRESSING ROOM

THANK YOU, THANK YOU! BUT NOW, MY FRIENDS,
I MUST DRESS. PLEASE GO NOW!



JUST AS THE OPERA STAR IS ABOUT
TO GO ON, THERE IS A KNOCK!!

WHO'S
THERE?

OPEN, PLEASE...
AN IMPORTANT
MESSAGE FOR
MADAME DUCHARME.



THE SINGER AND HER MAID ARE COVERED
BY THE GUNS OF THE INTRUDERS...

KEEP QUIET! LET OUT
A SQUEAL AND WE'LL
LET YOU HAVE IT!

OOH-H!



GIVE ME THAT
NECKLACE!



THE ROBBERS BACK OUT-INTO THE HANDS
OF THE CHIEF AND A SQUAD OF COPS...

HAUL UP, DENNING. WE'VE GOT YOU JUST
WHERE WE WANTED YOU FOR A LONG TIME.



DENNING WHIRLS, BUT THE GIRL IS QUICK...

WHA-!



THE
FURIOUS
JEWEL
THIEF
VICIOUSLY
STRIKES
SALLY...

YOU
DOUBLE-
CROSSER!

OW!

KEEP YOUR
HANDS OFF HER,
YOU CROOK!

YOU-YOU-
YOU WERE A
PLANT ALL
THE TIME!

YES, DENNING. OUR
TRAP WAS SET JUST
FOR YOU. INSURANCE
PEOPLE PUT US ON
YOUR TRAIL SOME
TIME AGO. ZAPPELI
IS BEING PICKED UP, TOO.

IF YOU HAD
NABBED HIM
EARLIER, CHIEF,
I WOULDN'T
HAVE GOTTEN
THAT SWAT.

SORRY. ABOUT THAT,
SALLY, BUT BEING
CAUGHT IN THE COMMISSION OF A ROBBERY
WILL GET THIS BIRD A
STIFFER SENTENCE.

YOU KNOW,
CHIEF, HE
HAD THE
LOVELIEST
NEGLIGEEES
IN HIS
APARTMENT!

DON'T WORRY, SALLY.
WHEN WE GET A
NICE FAT CHECK
FOR THIS WORK,
I'LL BUY YOU THE
PRETTIEST ONES
IN TOWN.

GAIL FORD - GIRL FRIDAY

by Ray McClelland

"THE CASE OF THE FRUSTRATED MOLL"



LATE ONE NIGHT,
ON THE WATERFRONT
OF A LARGE CITY,
THE FOGGY DARK-
NESS SHROUDS AN
OLD ABANDONED
DOCK WHERE A
HEAVY OBJECT IS
DUMPED INTO THE
MURKY WATER...



NEXT DAY, INSPECTOR MADSON CALLS IN HIS SECRETARY AND TIM McQUADE...

THE BODY OF TOMMY
CALLEN WAS FISHED
FROM THE RIVER THIS
MORNING. YOU KNEW
HIM, TIM, - JUST A
PETTY CROOK - BUT
HE HAD BEEN SHOT
FIVE TIMES, SO IT'S
MURDER, AND
IT'S OUR JOB
TO SOLVE IT.

GOOD RIDDANCE,
I SAY!



THAT PUNK USED TO BE A PICK-POCKET BUT RECENTLY HE'S BEEN RUNNING AROUND WITH THE DRY DOCK MOB - BIG JIM CINZANO'S CROWD.



DOT KLINE WAS HIS GIRL, SHE MIGHT KNOW SOMETHING -



YOU WON'T GET ANYWHERE WITH HER. WHY DON'T YOU LET ME WORK THAT ANGLE?

THAT'S A GOOD IDEA, GAIL. TIM WILL STAY CLOSE BY IN CASE YOU NEED HELP FAST.



NEXT DAY, A NEW GIRL MOVES INTO THE HOUSE WHERE DOT LIVES...

THIS ROOM IS TEN DOLLARS A WEEK.

OKAY, I'LL TAKE IT.



BEFORE LONG, GAIL MEETS DOT...

HELLO -

HIYA!



SOON THEY BECOME FRIENDLY...

THE COPS MADE IT TOO HOT FOR ME IN BOSTON. I JUST GOT IN HERE THIS MORNING.



I USED TO BE IN THE PICKPOCKET RACKET, MY BOY FRIEND TAUGHT ME. BUT I HAVE BIGGER THINGS IN VIEW NOW.



LATER...

THEY'RE WHISTLING AT YOU, KID. YOU'VE MADE A HIT.

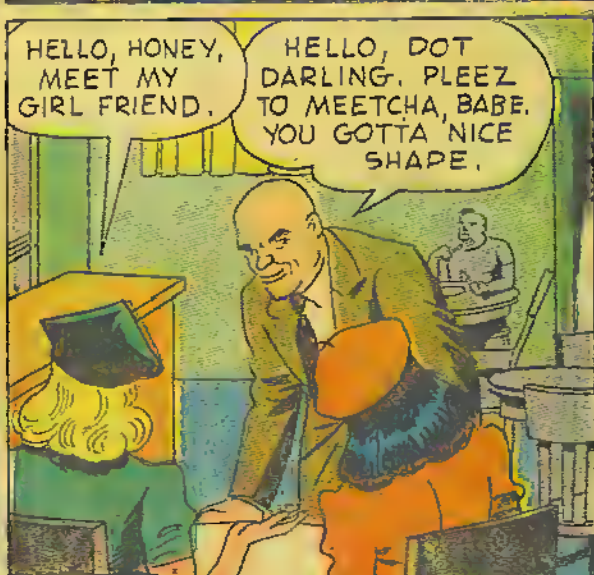


LET'S EAT HERE. THE JOINT IS RUN BY BIG JIM CINZANO. HE'S THE BOSS OF THE WATERFRONT, AND A SPECIAL FRIEND OF MINE..



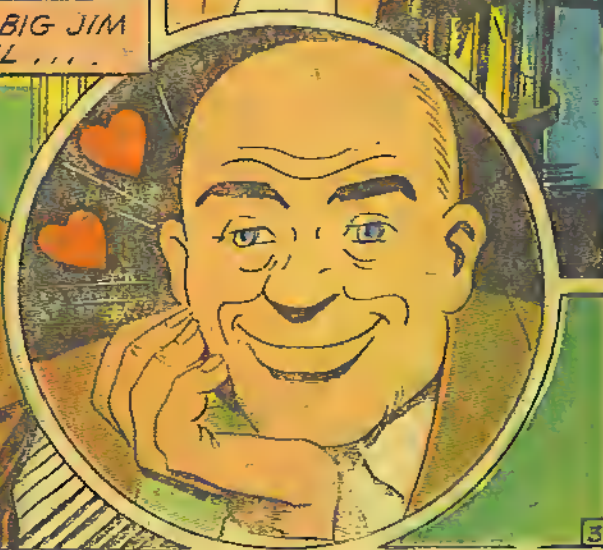
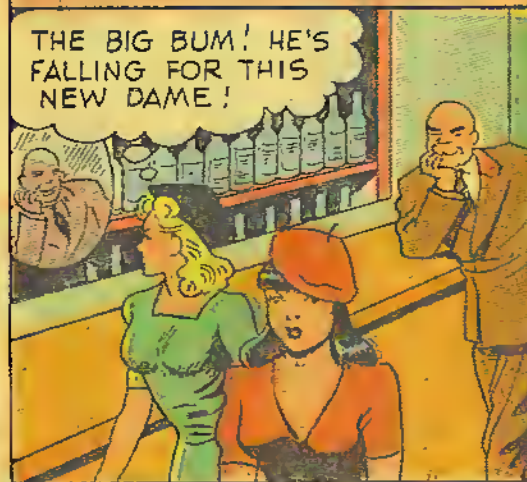
HELLO, HONEY, MEET MY GIRL FRIEND.

HELLO, DOT DARLING. PLEEZ TO MEETCHA, BABE. YOU GOTTA NICE SHAPE.



AS THEY LEAVE, DOT WATCHES-BIG JIM IN A MIRROR AS HE EYES GAIL

THE BIG BUM! HE'S FALLING FOR THIS NEW DAME!



DOT AND BIG JIM SURE ARE THICK! SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO MISS THE LATE BOY FRIEND ANY -



THAT NIGHT, GAIL MEETS MAC...

BIG JIM CINZANO IS MIXED UP IN IT, I'M GOING TO PLAY UP TO HIM.

OKAY, GAIL, BUT BE CAREFUL.



GAIL GOES TO THE CAFE ALONE.



HELLO, BABE, I WANNA TALK TO YUH, COME INTO MY OFFICE.

SURE, BIG BOY.



YOU'RE A NICE LOOKIN' DAME, HOW ABOUT PLAYIN' BALL WIT' DE MOB? WE NEED A FRONT GAL, I'LL SEE YOU'RE CUT IN FOR GOOD DOUGH.



WHAT'S MORE, BIG JIM'S GAL GETS DIAMONDS AND ANYTHING ELSE SHE WANTS - SEE?

WHY-WHY-LET ME THINK IT OVER.



AS GAIL EMERGES FROM BIG JIM'S OFFICE, SHE RUNS INTO DOT...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

JUST VISITING, DEARIE.



ANGRY, DOT GOES IN TO SEE BIG JIM.

DON'T YOU TRY TO DITCH ME, JIM CINZANO! WE'RE BOTH IN THIS UP TO OUR NECKS. TOMMY COULD HAVE BEEN ALIVE TODAY IF YOU --

THINGS ARE GETTING HOT!



NOTHING LIKE A JEALOUS WOMAN TO SPILL THE BEANS! I THINK THE TIME IS JUST ABOUT RIPE --



MAC, TELL THE INSPECTOR TO SURROUND BIG JIM'S PLACE TOMORROW NIGHT ABOUT TEN. LISTEN IN AT HIS OFFICE!



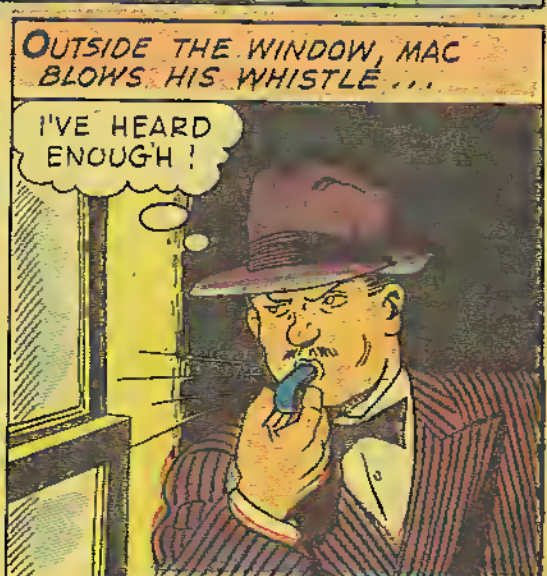
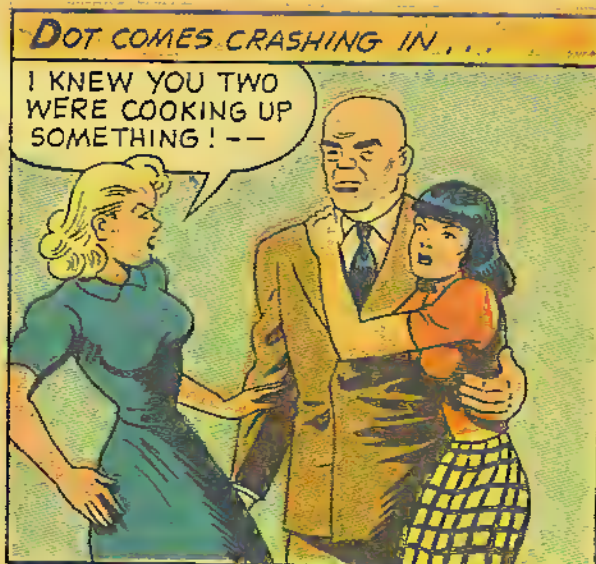
THAT NIGHT, DOT WATCHES WHEN GAIL ENTERS BIG JIM'S CAFE...



HELLO, BIG JIM. HERE I AM!

I KNEW YOU'D BE BACK, BABY.





COPS BEGIN TO BARGE IN DOWNSTAIRS...



...AS WELL AS UPSTAIRS...

**PUT 'EM
UP!!**



**ALL RIGHT, BOYS,
TAKE THESE TWO
TO THE GOW.**

**CURSE THAT TWO-TIMING
GIRL! I SHOULDN'T HAVE
TRUSTED HER IN THE
FIRST PLACE!**



**IT'S ALL
HER FAULT!**

**IT SURE IS, SISTER!
SHE MADE YOU TIP
YOUR HAND FASTER
THAN ANY MAN
COULD.**



**I'M PROUD OF MY "GIRL FRIDAY" AND
SO IS THE WHOLE DEPARTMENT!**



DON'T MISS GIRL FRIDAY IN OUR NEXT ISSUE . . .

RAY HALE

NEWS ACE

ONE DAY, THE CITY EDITOR OF THE MIDVALE "CLARION" CALLS IN HIS FAMOUS REPORTER, RAY HALE, AND TELLS HIM OF A SITUATION THAT HOLDS THE POSSIBILITY OF A GOOD FEATURE FOR THE PAPER. HALE, A GOOD NEWSMAN, LISTENS CAREFULLY AND PREPARES TO GO ON HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT AT ONCE...

HALE, HERE'S AN IDEA FOR A STORY, THERE ARE TWO RIVAL CARNIVALS PLAYING THIS TOWN AT THE SAME TIME. GO OUT TO THE LOTS AND SEE IF THERE IS AN ANGLE. I HEAR THAT ONE OF THEM IS HAVING A LOT OF TROUBLE.

OKAY, BOSS. WE NEED A GOOD FEATURE FOR THE WEEK-END EDITION. I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DIG UP.

BUT EVEN AS THEY SPEAK, THE BIG THREE CIRCUS IS HAVING A SERIES OF PETTY DISASTERS. A STENCH BOMB EXPLODES AT THE MATINEE...

THE SHOW MUST GO ON!

PHEW! LET US OUT OF HERE!

GIVE ME SOME AIR!



THEN, A CORNER OF THE BIG TOP MYSTERIOUSLY COLLAPSES! THESE "ACCIDENTS" ARE MAKING THE PAYING CUSTOMERS GOOD AND MAD!...

HELP! THIS IS TERRIBLE!

I'LL NEVER COME TO THIS CIRCUS AGAIN!

I'LL SUE THEM!



HALE ARRIVES AT THE BIG THREE LOT FOR THE NEXT PERFORMANCE...

I HAVEN'T SEEN A CIRCUS IN YEARS. IT'LL BE FUN TO BE A KID AGAIN -

COME ONE
COME ALL
DON'T MISS THE
BIG THREE
CIRCUS

100 HITTING
BIG STAR ACTS
MIDVALE, IOWA



HALE TAKES HIS SEAT ON THE STANDS, BUT AFTER THE RECENT DISASTERS, THERE IS HARDLY A HANDFUL OF CUSTOMERS IN THE BIG TENT...

BOY! THE SHOW IS REALLY SWELL. THOSE PERFORMERS ARE REALLY GOOD - BUT I WONDER WHY BUSINESS IS SO BAD...?



A LITTLE WHILE LATER THE STAR AERIAL ARTIST STARTS SWINGING THROUGH THE AIR, HANGING BY HIS TEETH! A TERRIBLE THING HAPPENS!



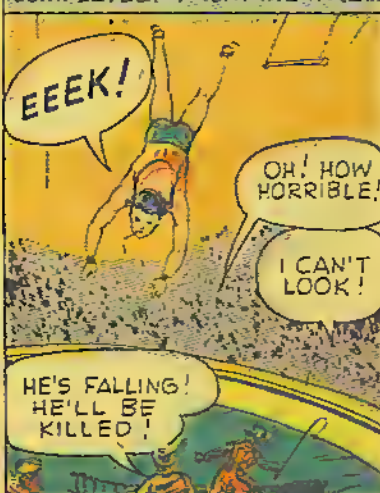
THE WIRE'S SNAPPING! I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING! -- I'M GOING TO FALL!!

INSTANTLY, THE TRAPEZE MAN REACHES UP, GRASPS THE WIRE ABOVE THE SHREDDED SECTION, BUT THE STRANDS GO!...



HELP! HURRY! FINGERS SLIPPING!

BEFORE RUSTABOUTS CAN HELP, THE PERFORMER'S FINGERS SLIP COMPLETELY FROM THE WIRE...



EEEK!

OH! HOW HORRIBLE!

I CAN'T LOOK!

HE'S FALLING! HE'LL BE KILLED!

RAY HALE LEARNS THAT THE FALL WASN'T AN ACCIDENT...

LOOK AT THAT WIRE! SOME RAT DELIBERATELY CUT IT HALF THROUGH. I EXAMINED IT LAST NIGHT AND IT WAS ALL RIGHT!



THIS LOOKS LIKE A FEATURE STORY-

THE SHOW FOLK GRUMBLE...

POOR JOSE! HE WAS THE BEST HIGH-WIRE MAN IN SHOW BUSINESS!



THAT MILLS CARNIVAL BUNCH ARE A GANG OF MURDERERS! KILLING PEOPLE AND RUINING THE BIG THREE SHOW JUST SO THEY CAN BUY IT UP CHEAP

HALE JOINS THE PERFORMERS...

WORST OF IT IS, WE CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER! THE BOSS IS LOSING SO MUCH MONEY EVERY PERFORMANCE BECAUSE OF THESE FREAK DISASTERS, HE'LL SOON HAVE TO GIVE IN TO THE MILLS OUTFIT!



THE MILLS CARNIVAL, A RIVAL COMPANY, WANTS TO BUY UP THE BIG THREE SHOW, CHEAP, SO THEY ARE TRYING TO FORCE THEM OUT OF BUSINESS WITH COWARDLY, MURDEROUS TRICKS! THEY'LL PROBABLY TRY TO SPOIL THE NEXT STAR ACT. THAT'S THE LION-TAMING ACT. I'VE GOT TO STOP THEM!



HALE GOES ACROSS TOWN AND EAVESDROPS OUTSIDE THE OFFICE OF RONALD MILLS, OWNER OF THE MILLS CARNIVAL...



WHEN THAT LION-TAMING ACT COMES ON, DO YOUR STUFF, PUDGY! THIS WILL BE THE FINISHING TOUCH FOR THAT BIG THREE OUTFIT AND I CAN BUY A GOOD SHOW FOR A SONG!

LEAVE IT TO ME, BOSS!

A LITTLE WHILE LATER, THE ANIMAL ACT SENSATION OF THE YEAR COMES ON UNDER THE BIG THREE TOP...

ATTA BOY! - UP!
... EASY, KONGA!



HALE, WHO HAS BEEN STICKING CLOSE TO PUDGY, SEES THE MILLS TOUGH WHIP OUT A BB PISTOL AND SHOOT AT THE PERFORMING LIONS...

HEY-
CUT THAT
OUT!

THIS'LL RUIN
THOSE CATS!



MADDENING THE BEASTS WITH BB SHOT, EH? THIS'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU, TOUGH GUY!



THE INFURIATED LIONS RAGE AROUND THEIR TRAINER, WHO STRIVES TO CONTROL THEM...

SOMETHING
IS TORTURING
THEM!



FINALLY, THE TRAINER MANAGES TO GET THE ANGRY JUNGLE BEASTS BACK INTO THEIR CAGES...

WHEW! - THAT
WAS CLOSE! WONDER
WHAT GOT THEM SO
UPSET?



BUT WHEN HALE LEAVES THE TENT...

THAT'S THE GUY WHO
INTERFERED WITH PUDGY.
LET HIM HAVE IT!



HALE, UNCONSCIOUS, IS LOADED INTO A CAR BEHIND THE BIG THREE TENT...

HURRY UP, BEFORE ANYBODY SEES US -



THE REPORTER IS LATER DUMPED ON THE FLOOR IN THE OFFICE OF THE MILLS CARNIVAL. HE REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS IN TIME TO HEAR -

WE CAN'T FAIL THIS TIME, NOW THAT THIS MEDDLING FOOL IS OUT OF THE WAY. PUDGY, YOU STAY HERE WHILE I GO WITH THE BOYS AND TURN LOOSE THAT CAGE OF GORILLAS.

THIS STUNT WILL FINISH THE BIG THREE FOR GOOD, BOSS!



HE'S GOING TO SLEEP - LUCKY MY FEET AREN'T TIED --

HO-HUM-



CREEPING UP BACK OF THE DOZING PUDGY, HALE DELIVERS A TERRIFIC KICK ON THE BACK OF THE TOUGH'S NECK...

THIS'LL DO THE TRICK, EVEN IF MY HANDS ARE TIED!

UGG-GH!



WITH A KNIFE FROM THE HOODLUM'S POCKET, HALE CUTS HIS BONDS...

HOPE I GET TO THE CIRCUS GROUNDS IN TIME -



HALE TAKES THE BB GUN FROM THE HELPLESS HOOD'S POCKET...

I HAVE A HUNCH THIS WILL COME IN HANDY, I'LL CATCH A CAB AND GET OVER TO THE BIG THREE - BUT FAST !!



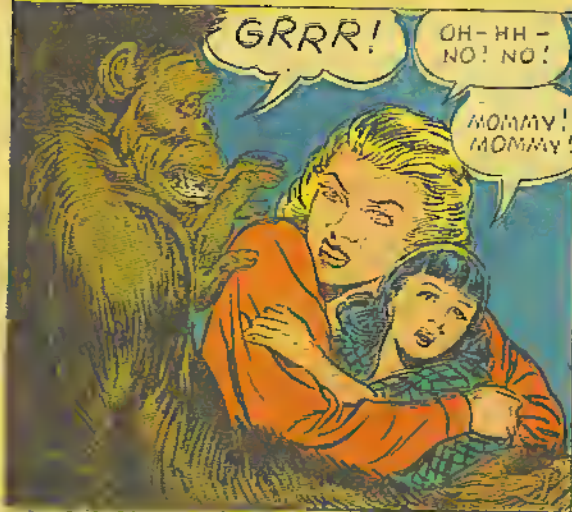
MEANWHILE, AT THE BIG THREE, PANIC SETS IN...



HELP! POLICE!

GORILLAS LOOSE!

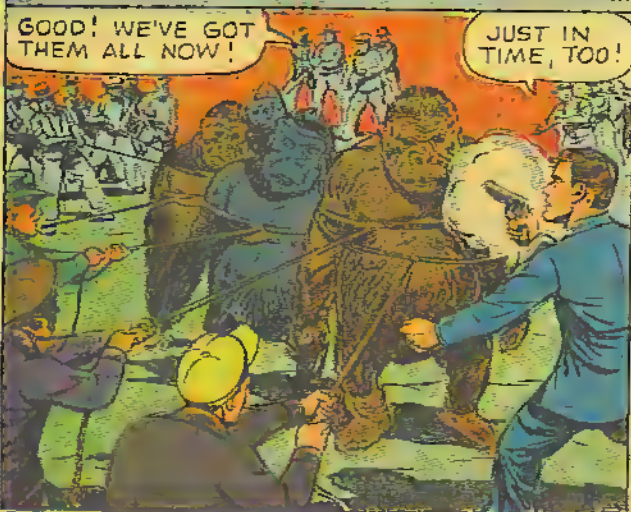
ONE OF THE AWESOME CREATURES CORNERS A WOMAN AND HER LITTLE GIRL ...



HALE ARRIVES JUST IN TIME, AND PEPPERS THE GORILLA'S EYES WITH BB SHOT ...



THE OTHER GORILLAS APPROACH, BUT HALE KEEPS THEM AT BAY WHILE THE KEEPERS LASSO THEM ...



A SQUAD OF COPS ARRIVE AND ORDER IS RESTORED ON THE GROUNDS ...



THANKS, HALE. YOU CERTAINLY RENDERED A GREAT PUBLIC SERVICE.

HE SURE HELPED US GET THE APES ROPE.

GLAD I WAS ABLE TO HELP. PUT RONALD MILLS UNDER ARREST. I'LL GIVE YOU ENOUGH TESTIMONY TO SEND HIM TO THE CHAIR FOR MURDER!!



LATER - AFTER AN "EXTRA" EDITION OF THE CLARION HAS HIT THE STREETS ...

